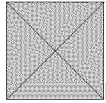


To: Fritz, Matthew[Fritz.Matthew@epa.gov]
From: Enck, Judith
Sent: Mon 2/29/2016 8:39:27 PM
Subject: Politco article Firday

<http://www.capitalnewyork.com/article/albany/2016/02/8592115/cuomo-aide-blames-epa-inaction-water-pollution-petersburgh>

Cuomo aide blames EPA for inaction on water pollution in Petersburg



By [SCOTT WALDMAN](#) 3:52 p.m. | Feb. 26, 2016 [1 follow this reporter](#)

HOOSICK FALLS — State officials said on Friday that they did not test water in Petersburg for the toxic chemical PFOA in 2014, even though a state employee privately raised the possibility of its presence in the water supply, because it was not on federal regulation lists.

POLITICO New York [reported on Friday](#) that a Department of Health staff member suspected that PFOA was being used at Taconic Plastics in Petersburg and emailed her concerns to three other officials in late 2014. Tests conducted more than a year later showed levels of PFOA — which has been linked to kidney and testicular cancer and thyroid problems — in the town water supply that are just below the federal warning levels, and the state is now helping distribute bottled water throughout the town.

On Friday, at a quickly assembled press conference in Hoosick Falls, state director of operations Jim Malatras said officials did not act in Petersburg, just

10 miles away, because PFOA was not on a federal watch list. He characterized the email as a staff member's inquiry, not an official report that the water was polluted.

"It wasn't a report, let's just say what it was, because the facts are important here," Malatras said. "A staffer was looking at the Hoosick Falls situation because the DOH was involved. They then said we're going to look upstream for other facilities, which they did. They checked a federal [EPA] list. They checked the list to see if PFOA was even listed, which it wasn't. So it wasn't that the staffer saw a list and said PFOA is on the list and didn't respond."

State health commissioner Dr. Howard Zucker said the state health department did not test for PFOA in Petersburg, even out of an abundance of caution, because the pollutant was not on a list of federally regulated chemicals.

"In 2014, the person in the email looked into that, and said it's not on the list of substances," he said. "There's a lot of different substances that are out there."

In early 2014, months before the DOH staff member suggested the possible use of PFOA in Petersburg in the email with colleagues, the federal Environmental Protection Agency already had issued a guideline on the pollutant, ruling that it could be dangerous to humans.

Federal regulators described PFOA as "a chemical or material that is characterized by a perceived, potential, or real threat to human health or the environment or by a lack of published health standards" in the March 2014 document.

Also on Friday, state officials announced that dozens of private wells in Hoosick Falls have tested positive for PFOA pollution.

At least one well in Hoosick Falls tested at 30 times the state limit, and others tested at 10 times the EPA's recommended limit of 100 parts per trillion, according to records obtained by POLITICO New York.

The state has conducted 176 water well tests, Malatras said, and 24 wells tested above the EPA's limit of 100 parts per trillion. The state is now working to install water treatment systems in all of those homes, at no cost to the homeowner, he said, adding that the state has received almost 300 requests so far to test drinking water wells. The state has also conducted almost 500 blood samples from residents of the town, according to Malatras, a top aide to Gov. Andrew Cuomo.

A temporary filter on the town's water supply has now been installed, though it will be flushed over the next few days and results will be discussed. Cuomo has not gone to Hoosick Falls in neighboring Rensselaer County since the water crisis was revealed, but he said he expects to come within the next few weeks.

During the news conference, state Department of Environmental Conservation and Department of Health officials reprised their explanations for the state's policy over the last year. When asked why the health department didn't act more swiftly even as the town's water supply showed troubling levels of PFOA, health commissioner Dr. Howard Zucker again blamed the EPA's change in its guidance for PFOA from 400 parts per trillion to 100 parts per trillion.

DEC commissioner Basil Seggos said the state is still trying to determine how long the water has been polluted in Hoosick Falls, and how far the pollution extends. The state also has tested for PFOA pollution in the town of Berlin, also in Rensselaer County, but the results were not positive for PFOA.